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ABSTRACT

This document describes a mentoring network for mid-career teachers--a natural extension beyond the induction stage. The focus for this presentation is the anatomy of change through colleague-led staff development. The noteworthy elements of this approach are as follows: (1) the voluntary participation of effective elementary and secondary teachers systematically assisting each other to fine tune their instructional skills; (2) formative evaluation exclusive of administrative involvement; (3) university/school district resources focused on teacher-initiated instructional change; (4) internal and external program support; and (5) a self-perpetuating change model empowering teachers in the district to expand and enhance their instructional competencies. (Author/JD)

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BEYOND INDUCTION: A COLLEGIAL SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

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by

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BEYOND INDUCTION: A COLLEGIAL SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

Overview

The authors describe a mentoring network for mid-career teachers--a natural extension beyond the induction stage. The focus for this presentation is the anatomy of change through colleague-led staff development. The noteworthy elements of this approach are as follows: (1) the voluntary participation of effective elementary and secondary teachers systematically assisting each other to fine-tune their instructional skills; (2) formative evaluation exclusive of administrative involvement; (3) university/school district resources focused on teacher-initiated instructional change; (4) internal and external program support; and (5) a self-perpetuating change model empowering teachers in the district to expand and enhance their instructional competencies.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

> "Professional development must be long-term--active and collaborative. In fact, those who are the objects of the professional development must increasingly become agents of their own development." (Policelli, 1987)

The plethora of recent effective school studies (Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1985; U.S. Department of Education, 1983, et. al.) indicate that the improvement of instruction is the prerequisite for ultimate effective schooling. The primary effective change agent is considered to be the administration and faculty of a particular building (Ohio Department of Education, 1984, p. v). Glickman (1985, pp. 376-377) presents a change strategy continuum of "persuasive, reeducative, and facilitative" activities evolving from "directive informational" assistance to "teacher leadership"--empowering of teachers to assume reasonable control over their staff development destiny via purposive change. This report chronicles a peer support network in two schools that focuses on the systematic analysis and improvement of instruction. It also highlights a collaborative effort between a school district and local university encompasing the principles of bridgeworking (DeBevoise, 1986). In addition, the following elements of the change process are addressed regarding its implementation; (1) enumerating specific goals; (2)

clarifying the underlying theory of change; (3) identifying resource needs; (4) locating sources of resistance, and (5) determining consultant roles and skills needed (University of Michigan, School of Education, Spring, 1985; Ohio Department of Education, 1983 and 1984).

FACTORS INHIBITING PURPOSIVE CHANGE

Two factors potentially inhibiting purposive change: (1) teacher isolation and (2) personal entrenchment in career stages, are addressed in this project. The potential pathology of isolation is a recognized concern of the profession. Glickman (1985, p. 32) observes that "...structurally, classrooms are set up so that teachers are difficult to supervise, do not receive feedback from others, and cannot engage in work collaboratively." This pathology is compounded by "...the sense in isolated settings that to seek advice from other teachers is to admit, at least to some degree, a lack of teaching competence" (Rosenholtz and Kyle, 1984, p. 12). Also, the importance of identifying and providing support systems for teachers at progressive stages of their careers (Ohio Department of Education, 1983, p. 22; Fuller and Brown, 1975) is central to this project.

Isolation, as a recognized deterrent to professional vitality, is reduced in this project by voluntary pairing of experienced, successful teachers through a collegial support network aimed at fine-tuning instructional expertise. It is also recognized that most mid-career teachers are seeking differentiated roles. The mean years of teaching experience of the teacher facilitators in this project is 14.9 years (See Appendix). The university consultants assessed these individuals as responsive to striving to improve their teaching effectiveness and to providing support to their peers with whom they are paired. This also dispells the stereotypic notion that mid-career teachers are entrenched in maintaining the status quo in their professional development.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MODEL

> "Coaching appears to be a necessary condition for transfer of training when the object of training is the building of repertoire." (Showers, 1983)

The following characteristics of this collegial support network are noteworthy:

FOCUS--Identified successful mid-career teachers volunteered to participate in a peer networking program ("coaching") that emphasizes systematic analysis and improvement of teaching expertise.

MODE--This clinically-based formative supervision program is external to any summative evaluation, and is exempt from building/district administrator involvement. Program facilitation is provided by university consultants.

CHARACTERISTICS--The following characteristics are intrinsic in the model: (1) focus on instructional behaviors; (2) peer support networking; (3) systematic identification of important teacher behaviors; (4) program provisions for a safe arena in which to test new teaching behaviors in a formative context; (5) voluntary teacher participation; and (6) absence of administrative involvement.

FUTURE--This pilot model will be self-perpetuating by the teacher facilitators in this year's project, helping participants in subsequent years. The project's process and relatively low cost facilitates its transportability to other buildings within the district and also to other districts, where it can be tailored to meet specific building/district needs.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MODEL

Overview of the District

The West Carrollton City School District is a southern suburb of Dayton, Ohio. Its enrollment is approximately 4,300 students in kindergarten through twelfth

grade, distributed in seven buildings. The composition of the community (approximately 28,000) is characterized as essentially blue collar with a lower-middle to middle socio-economic level. An increasing number of professional people are locating in the district.

The district's staff is relatively stable as the result of low teacher turnover. Although staff development activities have been provided to teachers in recent years, both administrators and teachers recognized the need for systematic programs aimed directly at the improvement of classroom instruction. This collegial support network was created in response to this identified need. Initially, the model was developed in cooperation with the senior high school principal. Soon after, a year-round elementary school expressed interest in participating in the pilot phase of the program.

Building Support

Following deliberation between the university consultants and district personnel representing the significant constituencies, a needs assessment was conducted in the two schools chosen to participate in the pilot phase. Numerous presentations and discussions with the district's administrators, board of education, and executive committee of the teachers' association resulted in broad-based participation and support for the program. Also, minor modifications were made in response to the needs and concerns of these constituencies.

Program Description

Participant selection was through volunteers nominated by peers who were then offered the opportunity to participate in the program. Nomination criteria were based on demonstrated teaching effectiveness, leadership among peers, and willingess to make a two-year commitment to participate in the program. Twelve senior high

school and six elementary teachers represent the initial year's cadre of participants, to be trained in the beginning phases of the peer support network. (See Appendix.) To date, all eighteen of the original group are participating.

Foci for the training and participation components of the program are formative clinical supervision processes and the incorporation of effective teaching practices gleaned from a current survey of the literature. All activities, described in the subsequent section, are research-based and are provided in a participatory mode.

External funding from a private foundation is augumented by a significant monetary commitment by the district. Teacher facilitators receive stipends for the training and conference sessions as well as being eligible to register for university graduate-level credit. Substitute teachers are employed to provide release time for the teacher facilitators to conference and observe classes.

TRAINING

Focus for Facilitator Training

There are two training phases in this model for teacher facilitators. The first phase occurs over a three day period in August with the participants working with the university consultants. The second phase of the training occurs in monthly two hour seminar sessions during the school year. Each of the monthly sessions involves a review of the completed observations and a new focus for the next month. The teacher facilitators freely comment on any logistical problems related to the observations and conferences as well as the usefulness of the technique in specific teaching situations.

Training Topics

The training topics are divided into six categories. These are as follows:

(1) project overview and collegial support/peer networks
(2) effective teaching/schools research
(3) clinical supervision process
(4) self/teaching awareness
(5) awareness of students/student needs
(6) awareness of teacher/student interactions during instruction

In examining the overview of the project as well as in discussing the concept of collegial and peer support networks, the teacher facilitators are exposed to several different types of models. Many states are enacting teaching standards that prescribe entry year/induction programs for first year teachers (Galvez-Hjornevick, 1986). Justification for collegial networking of experienced teachers is advocated by Joyce and Showers (1988), Hopfengardner and Walker (1984), Glatthorn and Newberg (1984), and Eliott and Chidley (1985). These models typically incorporate the clinical supervision process (Killion and Harrison, 1985) as well as components of effective staff development programs (Sparks, 1983).

This project embraces the concepts and practices generally recognized as vital to the effective collegial support networking of teachers. In addition, the three aspects central to this project: (1) the formative supervision dimension, (2) voluntary participation by experienced teachers, and (3) no direct administration involvement in the project, represent some of the essential elements in this collegial support network.

The research on effective teaching and schools represents the second training area for the teacher facilitators. In this context, information is presented from current research that summarizes the results of studies on such topics as school climate, time-on-task, classroom organization, and teacher accountability. The third area in the training process is clinical supervision. The teacher facilitators are asked to determine their own beliefs regarding supervision. They also participate in a peer observation simulation based on the work of Sparks (1983) and analyze the steps in the coaching process (Joyce and Showers, 1988). Several different types of

data capture protocols are examined, including one adapted from Kindsvatter and Wilen (1981). The teacher facilitators are encouraged to modify and develop their own data capture formats to meet their unique teaching situations. Throughout the monthly sessions, the usefulness of the data capture forms is reexamined to make the collection and analysis of information as effective and efficient as possible.

The fourth area of training for the teacher facilitators is self and teaching awareness. During the first phase of training, the university consultants administer the Kiersey Temperament Sorter, a short form of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. This instrument groups individuals into four dichotomies; (1) extrovert-introvert, (2) sensing-intuitive, (3) thinking-feeling, and (4) judging-perceiving. The results of this profile indicate certain strengths in relation to the teaching situation as well as teaching style preferences. A second instrument, based on the work of Kolb (1983) and McCarthy (1980) dealing with learning style preferences, is also part of the self awareness segment of the training. The teacher facilitators analyze their right/left/integrated brain function preferences. The focus for this awareness information is on helping teacher facilitators become aware of the personal constructs they bring to the teaching processes so they can capitalize on their strengths and be knowledgeable of their weaknesses.

The fifth dimension of the teacher facilitator training involves an awareness of students and student needs. Using the results of the Kiersey Temperament Sorter, Learning Style Inventories, Right/Left/Integrated Brain Function Survey, the teacher facilitators are encouraged to find a peer, administer these instruments and then discuss the results. After collecting this information, the teacher facilitators are asked to reflect on the students that are "resident in memory" from last year's classes. After the teacher facilitators identify some of the characteristics of these memorable students, they are asked to match these characteristics with

information from the assessment instruments that have been used, utilizing a student characteristic checklist. Supportive and conflicting matches are examined to determine if teaching and student learning styles may be related to the types of classroom interaction that occurred. The importance of individual perceptions based on teaching and learning styles is emphasized throughout the training so the teacher facilitators visualize the importance of knowing their preferred methods and modes of teaching as compared to methods and modes of student learning.

The sixth category, awareness of teacher/student interactions, is an extension of the previous topic, awareness of students/student needs. Training in this category consists of an introduction to the impact of classroom organization patterns on student behavior, methods and techniques that influence student learning. The initial information in this category deals with the use of body signals by students to indicate involvement, interest, attention, and non-involvement. This presentation includes an awareness of seating options and attention during instruction. The pattern of teacher proximity is also considered and this topic represents one of the initial teacher facilitator observations during the school year. Effective Teaching for Higher Achievement, an ASCD multimedia package (1984) is presented to focus on academic learning time, classroom organization options, influencing student behavior, teacher expectations, and the six stages of instruction. These involve daily review, presentation, guided practice, feedback, independent practice, and periodic review. Essentially, this material is integrated with the Madeline Hunter model and renamed "explicit teaching" (Rosenshine, 1986). The flexibility of these approaches is emphasized because of the wide range of teaching fields and classroom structures represented in the teacher facilitator group. The emphasis in the training process is modification of information and method to the facilitators' teaching styles, subject-level requirements, and teaching

situations. The focus in phases one and two of the training involves the sharing of both successful and unsuccessful methods and techniques among the facilitators.

Phase Two Training Sessions

During the school year, the following topics are presented at the monthly seminars, in addition to the interaction on the previous teacher facilitator observations:

(1) Analysis of time-on-task versus instructional activity
(2) Use of wait time in questioning techniques
(3) Effects of students' nonverbal behavior on teachers
(4) Instructional modifications for non-organized students to build better organizational skills
(5) Questioning levels/styles/options and semantic mapping
(6) Learning style/approach modifications for specific subject areas
(7) Development of self-monitoring data capture forms
(8) Involving others in the collegial support network

Each of these topics is presented within the context of the teaching/learning situations of the teacher facilitators. The high school and elementary teachers are divided into two seminar groups to permit more topic diversity and situation-specific interaction. The problems related to scheduling substitute teachers are different for high school and elementary teachers' release time to co-observe and conference. The elementary teacher facilitators need to have greater flexibility of substitute time and prefer to have pre/post-observation conferences after school. The high school teachers need to coordinate pre/post-observation times based on the academic period schedule. Neither group wants to be away from their classrooms for any length of time. The scheduling of observations and substitutes is done by a designated teacher in the high school and elementary buildings with the assistance of the building principals.

Teacher Facilitator Responses

The teacher facilitators are asked to prepare a log of their reactions to the

peer clinical supervision process. These logs are used by the university consultants to analyze the individual teacher's successes and frustrations. In the seminars, the teacher facilitators tend to focus on successes/failures from previous observations, discussion of ways to make the observations more effective/efficient, as well as expectations for the new data capture format or technique that will be used during the next observational time. They are also strongly encouraged to modify, create, and share data capture forms that they are using.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

There is an external as well as an internal evaluation component for this collegial support system. The external evaluation component is related to the foundation funding agency and conducted through their designated agent who visits the school district on numerous occasions to talk to representative teachers in the program and the university consultants. The internal evaluation component involves the presentation of a report to the Superintendent's Council at the end of the academic year. This report details the activities of the teacher facilitators during the year and includes anonymous teacher facilitator statements regarding the process and products emanating from collegial support network.

In addition to these summative measures, several formative ones are also used during the monthly seminar sessions. Beginning with the third seminar session, tallies are kept for each of the following types of responses contributed by the teacher facilitators:

(1) Specific student behavior descriptions
(2) Teacher/student interactions
(3) Instructional technique/setting descriptions
(4) Self revelation/awareness statements
(5) Peer observation/conference statements
(6) Organization statements--"Here I am..now what?"
(7) Clarification of procedure for report, observation, etc.

Also the number of times each of the teacher facilitators volunteers information as well as responds in support of another facilitator is noted. Generally, one of the university consultants charts teacher facilitator responses while the other one is presenting new information or reacting to the faciltator's comments. The roles of the consultants are switched several times during the seminar session to prevent fatique as well as promote interaction among all of the participants.

The purpose for this response tally procedure is: (1) to determine the effectiveness of the various training areas based on the responses and questions of the teacher facilitators; (2) the use and problems with the current pre/post-conference and observation techniques and protocols; (3) the overall teacher facilitator participation throughout the seminars; and (4) the attempt to identify problem areas before they escalate. The effectiveness of this tally procedure is evaluated at the end of the school year seminars through individual teacher facilitator response to a summative evaluation questionnaire and individual conferences.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The major implication of this peer networking project is the development of teacher facilitators who are able to guide the individual staff development of colleagues in their buildings and school district. The focus of this staff development model reflects the actual teacher perceived needs that arise through student and classroom instructional interaction.

The eighteen participants in the initial phase of the project have made the commitment to serve in collaboration with the university consultants as facilitators during the 1988-1989 school year to work with colleagues in their building and school district. Thus, the project becomes a self-perpetuating collegial network.

Training activities are generic as well as situation-specific, focusing on

clusters of effective teaching behaviors to be implemented by the teacher facilitators. Individual participants identify both long and short-term personal goals related to enhancing their instructional expertise. This model provides the school district with an opportunity to institute an economically efficient program that impacts directly on individual teaching effectiveness. Its adaptablity permits modifications that reflect the participants' emerging needs. This model is easily adapted to the unique needs of other school districts and their faculties.

Numerous unanticipated perceptions have been derived from this project to date. Among the most significant are:

1. The initial training workshops conducted in the week preceeding the beginning of the school year provided too much content in the allotted time frame. Program adjustments need to be made in this area for subsequent years.
2. Much time and effort was devoted to searching for consensus and building support bases for the project before it was launched. This was a fruitful investment in assuring program acceptance.
3. Both teachers and administrators in the participating school district are fearful that such a project will evolve into a career ladder/master teacher model. There are no programmatic provisions that lead to this end.
4. In spite of speculation by some parties, district administrators are comfortable being excluded from the observation/conferencing components of the program. This clearly attests to the acceptance of a teacher-led support network.
5. Staff development programming needs to be sensitive to emerging needs and concerns of participants.

6. Teachers in this project are opposed to a collegial support program in which certain practitioners are identified as mentors to assist less-proficient colleagues. They clearly desire to participate on a co-equal basis; i.e., effective teachers supporting other effective teachers.
7. Effective veteran teachers are vehement about not leaving their classes on a regular basis to observe peers. This presents scheduling implications for for the project coordinators.
8. Collegial support networking, especially at the high school level, clearly reduces teacher isolation.
9. Participants report that their teaching has taken on greater focus as the result of this project.
10. Lounge talk now generally pertains to instructional content and methodology, as opposed to light social conversation.
11. Mid-career teachers do desire assistance in systematically improving instructional effectiveness.
12. Numerous non-participant teachers are inquiring about being involved next year.

The preceeding observations indicate a receptive group of practitioners are enthusiastic about their commitment to this project and the ways in which the focus of instruction has improved. The ultimate beneficiaries, of course, are their students. The honeymoon phase has produced many exciting outcomes, which will constitute the foundation for subsequent years.

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APPENDIX

TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF PARTICIPANTS

(N=18)

Elementary School	Years of Experience	Teaching Areas
N = 6	9	Learning disabilities
	13	Grades 3 and 4
	18	Reading
	18	Art
	19	Grades K and 1
	20	Grades 1 and 2
Mean =	16.2 years	
High School		
N = 12	4	Social Studies
	7	Science and Math
	8	Science
	10	Math
	12	Science
	15	English
	16	Science
	17	HPE
	19	Home Economics
	21	English
	23	Science and Math
Mean =	14.2 year	

APPENDIX (Cont'd)

COMPOSITE

Years of EXPERIENCE	Number of Teachers
N = 18	
1 to 5 years	1
6 to 10 years	4
11 to 15 years	3
16 to 20 years	8
21 to 25 years	2
Mean = 14.9 years	